

UTICA'S HANDSTAMPED POSTAL MARKINGS: 1798-1855

The postal history of Utica, New York in the pre-stamp and stampless period is a rich one. From the date of its first straight line handstamp postmark in 1798, the then small village of Utica, situated on the Mohawk trail, experienced substantial commercial growth in the 1820's and 1830's with the completion of the Erie Canal. Even more significant development occurred in the 1840's and 1850's with the coming of the railroad which linked the City of Utica to Albany and New York to the east and Buffalo and beyond to the west.

Collectors have long admired Utica's attractive double oval handstamp which had a long history of usage from 1830 until the early 1850's. Less known are the variety of Utica's handstamped postmarks which preceded the double oval's usage as well as those that marked the mail until the end of the stampless period in 1855. This one-frame exhibit provides an overview of the variety of Utica's handstamped postmarks used from 1789 through 1855.

Virtually all reported handstamps are included in this exhibit. The more notable markings include:

- Two examples of Utica's only Straight Line handstamp used in 1798 and 1799;
- the Oval with a large "U" in Utica used in 1802;
- The Blue Double Oval with matching "2" paying the Circular Rate and
- The 1855 Black Circle with matching "1" paying the Drop Rate.

A variety of handstamped auxiliary markings are shown demonstrating Utica's usage of a number of fancy boxed and ribbon markings.